

Sent via email
The Honorable Marvin Abney
Chair
House Finance Committee
State House
Providence, RI 02903

May 4, 2021

Dear Chairman Abney,

STATEMENT TO SUPPORT H5789 by Rep. Cassar, Ajello, Costantino, Casey, Donovan, Kislak, Cortvriend, Baginski, Blazejewski, Tanzi

The Rhode Island legislature can be proud that it was one of the earliest states to enact paid family leave for parents and caregivers when it passed the paid family leave law in 2013.

However, as more states have enacted such laws with lengthier leave provisions – up to 12 weeks in most states with such laws -- and other more generous provisions, the Rhode Island law with just 4 weeks of leave has not kept pace and now has the shortest leave requirement.

In addition, the Rhode Island law which provides just 60% of wage replacement is the lowest among all paid family leave policies.

Data on the use of the Temporary Caregiver Insurance program shows that lower wage workers are the least likely to use TCI even though they make up the largest pool of workers contributing to the TDI/TCI fund. The current wage replacement of 60% may not be sufficient as it may not be enough to cover household expenses.

H5789 expands the current law in several important areas. It would:

- Increase the number of weeks a worker can use from 4 to 12 weeks in 2022,
- Expand the category of who a worker can take time to care for to include: grandchildren, siblings, and care recipients, and
- Increase the benefit rate from the current 60% of wages to 90% in 2022 for those earning minimum wage; to 75% in 2022 for those earning twice the minimum wage.

The Covid-19 pandemic has amplified the need to revise the TCI program in order for families to successfully handle home and work responsibilities. I encourage the members of the House Finance Committee to recommend passage of this legislation to the full House to continue to keep our state in the forefront of family-friendly policy.

Sincerely,



Maureen Maigret, Chair
Aging in Community Subcommittee
Long Term Care Coordinating Council
maureenmaigret@gmail.com